

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 IO-13 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 INRE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 SY-05 OPR-02 SCCT-01 OMB-01

SAB-01 SAM-01 A-01 AID-05 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 USSS-00

OC-05 CCO-00 ACDA-07 /111 W
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O R 161345Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9628

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION UN NY

CIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMSIXTH FLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTF SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLAND NORFOLK VA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 952/

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STUTTGART FOR ELG

3.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION APRIL 16: SECURITY IMPROVES; SYRIA-
ARAFAT AGREEMENT RENEWS HOPES

REF: BEIRUT 3371 (151320Z APR 76)

1. ANNOUNCEMENT THIS MORNING IN DAMASCUS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN SYRIANS AND ARAFAT IS BRINGING SIGH OF RELIEF HERE, IN HOPE IT IS FIRST STEP TOWARD RECONCILIATION OF JUMBLATT WITH SYRIA. FROM LEBANESE VIEWPOINT, MOST IMPORTANT POINTS ARE: (A) CALL FOR IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE: AND (B) RESURRECTION OF JOINT LEBANESE/PALESTINIAN/SYRIAN TRUCE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE. BASIS ON WHICH COMMITTEE WOULD BE RESUMED IS NOT YET CLEAR IN PRESENT FRAGMENTED STATE OF LEBANESE OFFICER CORPS. RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE TERMED TEMPORARY PENDING ELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT, WHO WOULD THEN DRAW UP HIS OWN SECURITY MEASURES. THE AGREEMENT ALSO (A) CALLED FOR CONTINUATION OF SYRIAN MEDIATION, (B) OPPOSED PARTITION, (C) REJECTED ARABIZATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF LEBANESE CRIS, AND (D) TOO GRATUITOUS SWIPE AT UNSPECIFIED US "PLANS" FOR LEBANON.

2. QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER JUMBLATT WILL BUY THESE POINTS, OR SOMETHING CLOSE TO THEM. OUR SOURCES CONTINUE TO TELL US JUMBLATT IS DISPOSED TO NEGOTIATE WITH DAMASCUS--INDEED, AS ONE MOSLEM LAY LEADER PUT IT TO EMBOFF, IS "OBLIGED" TO DO SO GIVEN SYRIA'S "EXCEPTIONAL" GEORGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL WEIGHT IN LEBANESE AFFAIRS. THIS LOOKS LIKE REALISTIC JUDGMENT TO US, ESPECIALLY IF ARAFAT IS ON BOARD SYRIAN BANDWAGON AS NOW SEEMS MORE THE CASE THAN NOT. HOWEVER, THE CRUSTY LEFTIST LEADER STILL INSISTS ON IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN TOOPS. MOREOVER, APPARENTLY NOTHING HAS BEEN DECIDED ABOUT THE DIVISIVE ISSUE OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S 17 POINTS, WHICH THE CHRISTIANS WITH SYRIA BEHIND THEM CLING TO AND WHICH JUMBLATT ATTACKS. THE HOPE IS THAT JUMBLATT WILL ALLOW THIS ISSUE TO BE SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG UNTIL THE NEW PRESIDENT IS ELECTED.

3. SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON GOT GENERAL ENDORSEMENT FROM
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FRENCH ENVOY GEORGES GORSE IN PRESS CONFERENCE IN BEIRUT TODAY, FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM DAMASCUS. (SEE SEPTTEL NOTAL.) THIS SHOULD GIVE JUMBLATT FURTHER FOOD FOR THOUGHT. GORSE IS RETURNING IMMEDIATELY TO PARIS, CANCELLING PLANS TO SEE MARONITE MONKS IN KASLIK.

4. SECURITY SITUATION HAS IMPROVED OVER PAST 24 HOURS. LAST NIGHT WITNESSED SEVERE EXCHANGES OF FIRE IN SEVERAL PARTS OF BEIRUT, BUT

THESE DIED DOWN AS MORNING CAME AND RELATIVE QUIET PREVAILS AS OF MIDDAY. LAST TWO DAYS HAVE SHOWN ANEW THE DIZZYING UPS AND DOWNS THAT BEIRUT SECURITY OFTEN EXPERIENCES. THE EFFECT OF THE CEASEFIRE CALL IN THE SYRIA-ARAFAT AGREEMENT HAS YET TO BE GAUGED. WHETHER BECAUSE OF YESTERDAY'S FIGHTING AROUND MUSEUM OR FOR OTHER REASONS, GENERAL AHDAB HAS SHIFTED HIS HQS. FROM THAT AREA TO A LOCATION ON ROAD TO AIRPORT. HIS PRESUMABLY IS A PERMANENT MOVE.

5. MAIN NEWS OTHERWISE INVOLVES COMINGS AND GOINGS OF VARIOUS DELEGATIONS, LEBANESE AND FOREIGN. FORMER PREMIER ABDALLAH YAFI AND FORMER MINISTER MALIK SALAM (BROTHER-IN-LAW OF KARAME) WENT TO DAMASCUS YESTERDAY ON A MISSION MEANT TO BE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF ARAFAT'S RECONCILIATION EFFORT. A BAATH PARTY DELEGATION HAS COME HERE FROM DAMASCUS AND REPORTEDLY WILL SEE JUMBLATT ON A SIMILAR MISSION. A VATICAN "GOOD WILL MISSION" LED BY MGR. MARIO BRINI, SECRETARY OF EASTERN CHURCHES CONGREGATION, ARRIVES HERE TODAY. (SEE ROME 6215, NOTAL.) TWO SOVIET NEWSMEN ON A NEAR EAST SWING, EUGENE PRYMAKOV AND IGOR BALAEV, ARRIVED IN BEIRUT YESTERDAY FROM DAMASCUS. THEY HAVE SEEN SAEB SALAM AND WILL INTERVIEW OTHER POLITICAL FIGURES DURING A WEEK'S STAY. ALL THESE DELEGATIONS--EXCEPT POSSIBLY THE SOVIET ONE, THE PURPOSE OF WHICH NOBODY IS SURE ABOUT--LEND CREDENCE TO THE HOPE THAT MAJOR EFFORTS ARE UNDER WAY TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS PEACEFULLY.

6. THERE IS LITTLE DISCERNIBLE MOVEMENT IN PRESIDENTIAL SWEEPSTAKES. THE POTENTIAL CHAMOUN CANDIDACY HAS NOT MATERIALIZED, AND WE ARE NOW GETTING INDICATIONS THAT MARONITE LEADERS ARE BACKING OFF FROM THE IDEA. THEY ARE DUE TO MEET AGAIN TODAY AND MAY COME UP WITH AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON SUCCESSION ISSUE. FRANGIE HAS NOT YET SIGNED THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ALLOWING AN EARLY ELECTION, BUT SEVERAL SOURCES SAY HE IS LIKELY TO DO SO TOMORROW.

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